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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1414
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4204
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2016
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1881
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2452
RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2815

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASHGABAT 001111

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/25/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [GG](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: STEERING A NEUTRAL COURSE WITH THE
GEORGIAN EMBASSY

REF: A. ASHGABAT 1069

[1](#)B. ASHGABAT 1062

Classified By: Charge Sylvia Reed Curran for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) During a conversation on August 25, Georgian Ambassador Aleks Petriashvili told the Charge that despite the official August 16 MFA press statement expressing condolences to the family and friends of the deceased in South Ossetia (Ref A), no Turkmen official came to sign the embassy condolence book that was open from August 14-16. Furthermore, no one from the Turkmenistan government has expressed condolences to him or any other embassy official. Petriashvili had hoped that when President Berdimuhamedov shook hands with representatives from the diplomatic corps just prior to the official welcoming ceremony for the King of Jordan on August 24, the Turkmen leader might say a few words in passing. Instead, when Berdimuhamedov asked "Vso normalno?" (Everything ok?), and Petriashvili tried to get out "no, not really..," the president hurried down the line.

[1](#)2. (C) Petriashvili noted the August 16 press statement was released days after the conflict started. And while the press statement was extremely neutral, he was certain that Turkmen officials "thought about it more than 10 times" before deciding to finally issue a statement at all.

[1](#)3. (C) Petriashvili said he is not surprised by the Turkmen response. They preface almost all foreign policy issues by pointing to their neutral stance. Petriashvili said that many times before this August, Deputy Chairman/Foreign Minister Meredov told him that while Turkmenistan respects its relationship with Georgia, it does not interfere in conflicts or issues between two other countries.

[1](#)4. (C) COMMENT: We are also not surprised by the Turkmen response. We also expect that they did not sign the Russian condolence book. The Turkmen want to maintain a balance in relations with all partners and avoid pressure from any side.

END COMMENT.
CURRAN